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# Replacing Iran Regime Advocated by Gingrich

2/9/95

By John Diamond
Associated Press

The eventual, forced replacement of Iran's Islamic regime is the only long-term U.S. strategy that makes sense, House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) said yesterday.

Speaking to a conference of military and intelligence officers, Gingrich said he has yet to see a coherent strategy for fighting Islamic totalitarianism.

He said the United States should pursue an overall strategy that "helps Algeria survive, helps secularism survive in Turkey and Egypt, ultimately is designed to force the replacement of the current regime in Iran, which is the only long-range solution that makes any sense, and breaks up the capacity of the totalitarian forces whether they're in the West Bank killing Israelis or they're in New York City killing Americans." He did not provide details.

[In calling for the forced replacement of the Tehran government, Gingrich was urging means "short of military (ones)" but including "economic, diplomatic, cultural and others," his press secretary, Tony Blankley, said. Blankley emphasized the inclusion of unspecified "other" means, appearing to support some kind of covert operation, Washington Post staff writer Kenneth J. Cooper reported.

[Asked whether Gingrich was urging a change in current U.S. policy toward Iran, Blankley said, "He didn't elaborate. I think he wanted to raise the issue publicly, that this is something policymakers need to focus on more than most of them have," Cooper reported.]

Gingrich's speech mostly concerned the techniques of harnessing information technology for strategic and military advantage and the need to reorganize the U.S. intelligence system for the modern world.

Iran has been on the U.S. list of terrorist-sponsoring nations since 1984 but technically is not considered "totalitarian." Current U.S. policy is to use economic and political pressure in an attempt to force Iran to conform with international norms.